ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional) Visit of Mr. Max Hugel, DDA, to the Foreign Service Institute, School of Language Studies

FROM: C/LS
426 C of C

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE 6 April 1981

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE RECEIVED	DATE FORWARDED	OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
1. EO/DDA 7D-24 Hqs.	6 APR 1981	6 APR 1981	mfe	
2. ADDA	4-6		H	
3. DDA	4/6/81		mh	DD/A REGISTRY FILE: Training-5
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FORM 1-79 610 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

81-1237

6 April 1981

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

STAT FROM: [redacted]
Chief, Language School

SUBJECT: Visit of Mr. Max Hugel, DDA, to the Foreign Service Institute, School of Language Studies

STAT 1. Mr. Max Hugel, Deputy Director of Administration accompanied by [redacted] Chief, Language School visited the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Language School on 31 March. Our host was Pierre Shostal, Director of the School of Language Studies. Mr. Shostal introduced Mr. Hugel to Ambassador Paul Boeker, Director of the Foreign Service Institute. In a 15-minute conversation with Ambassador Boeker we were informed that the Foreign Service currently fulfills 67% of its overseas language-designated positions. We also discussed the language requirement for Foreign Service Officers which demands a professional level competence in at least a world language for the Foreign Service Officer to move from probationary to tenure status. Their incentive program concentrates on "hard" languages. Competence in any of the fourteen hard languages will result in a 10% bonus when used abroad and 15% for native level competence.

2. In Mr. Shostal's office we discussed their language school which trains about 2,000 per year (600 at any one time) and is manned by 200 instructors--69 of which have tenure, i.e., permanent slots. Mr. Shostal stressed the following points in indicating the direction of language training at FSI:

a. Training for the assignment. A concentration on core skills such as how to ask questions, how to make a presentation (e.g., on arms control), how to address a complaint to police authorities. The program is outlined in the attached policy paper dated 28 January 1981.

b. Short courses designed to meet the requirements of spouses, secretaries, clericals, etc., who need to have mobility primarily for morale purposes.

SUBJECT: Visit of Mr. Max Hugel, DDA, to the Foreign Service Institute, School of Language Studies

c. Overseas training, although a necessary adjunct up to training given at FSI, will probably be cut.

3. Mr. Shostal spoke of the usefulness of the interagency process whereby FSI received input regarding course content and programs from CIA, AID, Defense, Agriculture, and Commerce.

4. Mr. Shostal stressed testing for communicative and comprehension capacity. He felt that grammar has been over emphasized. Testing he said to Mr. Hugel's agreement should measure effectiveness.

5. This appeared to be a useful hour in a school which is closest to CIA's Language School in method and training programs.

STAT

Attachment

POLICY PAPER

The School of Language Studies has recently undertaken an intensive review of its language programs. A central objective of the review was to arrive at a determination of the degree to which these courses prepare students from our various client agencies for the kinds of communication tasks they will encounter on assignment overseas. Is a consular officer, for example, linguistically prepared to protest the mistreatment of an American prisoner; does an AID official have the communication tools to convince a group of village elders of the need for a family planning program? A corollary aim of the review was to determine the feasibility of providing comprehensive training in basic language structures while at the same time maintaining the flexibility to train for the kind of functional language use needed in the foreign affairs milieu.

In the past, SLS has often been called upon to make informal adaptations of its programs to accommodate specialized student, agency or U.S. mission needs. We have not, however, taken the further step of formulating a statement of policy with regard to meeting specific requirements for language use. The importance of foreign language proficiency or the lack of it to the conduct of U.S. affairs is currently the subject of intense public scrutiny, which clearly indicates this to be an appropriate time to reexamine our mandate -- as we are doing with the SLS Program Review -- and to begin to focus our efforts on the kind of progressive, professionally-relevant, task-oriented training which will meet the functional needs of our clientele. We believe such a focus can provide the School with a unity of purpose that will make language training more effective and provide client agencies a better return on their substantial investments in training. Levels of general language proficiency previously identified with professional competence are increasingly being found insufficient. In some instances, students who succeed admirably in training have encountered serious difficulty in putting the language to work upon arrival at post. The need to measure the success of our programs by the degree to which they prepare students for the tasks of the agencies served is manifest.

SLS will henceforth have as its central objective the provision of language training which develops language use competence appropriate to the job needs of U.S. Government employees serving abroad. We will endeavor to prepare students for the duties and functions of positions in U.S. missions abroad which carry language requirements. Our aim will be to provide the motivated, hard-working student with the functional equivalent of S-3/R-3 or better. We are fully aware that professional and social language needs frequently overlap in the realm of foreign affairs and this

will not go unrecognized in the adaptation of programs. We intend to train for language use in the context of job-related needs, whatever the scope of the job or the variety of speaking, reading, writing and comprehension skills required.

Reference to the new thrust of SLS training as "job-related" does not mean simply the addition of specialized vocabulary to existing courses, but the development of communication skills dedicated to problem resolution and tasks to be performed. It is not only words and forms which must be practiced and learned if language is to be made a usable communication tool, but the communications tasks themselves. Acknowledging the difficulty of adapting programs in specific terms to the diverse job requirements of the many agencies serviced by SLS, we intend to concentrate training efforts on the broader functional aspects of foreign affairs work which cut across job and agency lines. If, for example, the functional objective of the moment happens to be the ability to formulate inquiries aimed at eliciting useful information, a communication task is defined which can encompass the needs of a visa officer doing interviews, a political officer seeking opinions on upcoming elections, a military attache trying to gain information about troop deployments, an Agricultural attache looking for projections on crop yields, etc. In the area of aural comprehension skills, a functional objective might be the ability to follow an exposition or conversation in the target language in which the student is not a participant. The appropriate classroom activity might involve some team teaching with two or more native speakers working together with combined classes. We believe that by viewing "job-related" language needs in this way, rather than redesigning traditional drill and dialogue exercises around an exhaustive analysis of overseas job descriptions, we will be serving true communicative competence. Moreover and more importantly, it will allow the student practice in accomplishing tasks which are germane to needs and can be worked with and practiced at all levels of language proficiency. Thus, immediately after the student has been introduced to a given structural or syntactical point he/she will be required to "get something done" with it in a meaningful communication context.

Persons on assignment who do not have a directly job-related need for the language (spouses, non-LDP officers, officers not assigned abroad, people on language probation) are welcome to enroll in the new courses, provided they have an interest in functional communication goals and foreign affairs subject matter, and with the knowledge that many areas of language use which may be pertinent to their needs (shopping, recreation, household problems, non-professional travel) will not be integral parts of the

long-term courses (as they are of the FAST courses) enough they may be addressed peripherally. The same high standards of performance and achievement in the language will apply to all students.

Students' success in language training will not be evaluated solely against the absolute measurement of the language itself but also against functional objectives. Utilizing the same scale of relative proficiency as at present, SLS testing will give greater emphasis to functional communicative competence and will interpret proficiency level definitions to include the professional context and task resolution, with the ultimate goal of measuring the student's ability with the language rather than in it.

Development and implementation of the training program described here extends beyond SLS, and will require cooperation and participation of other parts of FSI, especially SAS. Much of the subject matter of the new program will be area-relevant. Thus, the program both builds on and broadens the joint program of language and area studies which SLS and SAS have been developing.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. FSI will be in touch with the agencies serviced by the School in the coming weeks to procure information as to their field needs for eventual incorporation into the design of all programs. The nature of the information sought will be along broad functional lines rather than detailed "job descriptions." The data collection process has already begun with a questionnaire concerning job-related language use which has gone out to some 50 posts.

2. The next phase of the SLS Program Review will identify for each program the steps to be taken in adapting current curricula to the new orientation. The Program Review will be taken over at this stage by the newly created Department of Program and Staff Development (PSD).

3. A series of seminars and working groups will be undertaken by SLS to prepare staff members in both an informational and pedogogical sense to adapt to new requirements. The design and implementation of this program will be the responsibility of the PSD.

4. PSD will be tasked with review of proficiency definitions and the development of testing procedures to measure the kind of functional communicative competence appropriate to foreign affairs work. To be completed by August 1981.

5. In the adaptation of present courses cultural and area studies components will be incorporated into the course rather than identified as appurtenances to a basically grammar-focused approach. In order to facilitate this, appropriate SAS staff members will be designated to work with PSD.

6. All courses will be required to reflect substantial job-related methodological and conceptual content by August 1981. Fully-developed job-related programs are targeted for August 1982. Standards for course content will be promulgated by SLS Management.

PROGRAM CONCEPTS

Summary

In the past, SLS linguists and staff have been called upon to take the initiative in determining what the appropriate content of individual programs should be. Consequently, we have seen considerable variance in terms of priorities and little continuity in the School curriculum. There has also been a lack of specific guidance that would help course designers focus on the professional foreign language needs of the SLS clientele.

Steps are currently being taken by SLS management to provide the School with unifying policies, objectives, priorities and standards by which the success of its curriculum may be measured. An investigatory phase, the Program Review, marks the beginning of the promulgation of these specifications. This paper will discuss the findings of the review committee, the issues involved in adapting training to perceived needs and the actions recommended to implement new policies. The discussion will necessarily concentrate on areas requiring change, which should not give the impression that there is not a great deal about current programs worth preserving or that the negative aspects are being unduly emphasized. The process of adaptation to new requirements will take time, and we do not intend to rush things to completion at the expense of clarity or quality. The process will also take everyone's help in SLS, but in our view this does not represent additional work so much as a recasting and reemphasis of present efforts.

It is our belief that many of the language elements now included in the long-term courses are relevant, and necessary for 3/3 competence in any context. The problem is that these elements are "studied"--dissected, analyzed, memorized--rather than absorbed and practiced in the kinds of communication tasks which will be encountered overseas.

Our initial objective, then, will be to implement some philosophical and methodological changes and innovations by the August, 1981 starts, an undertaking which we believe can be made within the confines of our

FY-81 Financial Plan at least to the extent that we can reprogram some activities. What will thereafter emerge in terms of resource implications from the contracting sessions with individual program designers (Program Review, Phase III) about the adaptation of their courses remains to be seen. We do expect, however, that additional resources may be required in the FY-82 budget to cover costs of some materials development projects and staff development, but it would be premature to attempt at this time to place a dollar figure on what they might be. We expect to have a good grasp of this issue in a few weeks.

Language vs. Language Use

Perhaps the most difficult assumption, philosophically speaking, with which management must come to grips in SLS is that of the primacy of language itself in the training. Some programmers appear to have confused the need to provide a thorough grounding in the language with their professional desire to be comprehensive, even exhaustive, in explaining it. Hence some courses, rather than take up a point of grammar or vocabulary strictly in the context in which it appears, attempt to deal with it at once in every context in which it could possibly appear. Training is, after all, for an assignment, not for a lifelong relationship with the language, and there is neither time nor a real need to teach everything.

Decisions must be made in SLS about which aspects of language are appropriate for students given their professional objectives. Ultimately, the assignment needs of the student must take precedence in reaching such decisions.

It is management's intention to pursue a pragmatic, professionally relevant course in training which emphasizes language use over an encyclopedic theoretical knowledge of language.

Dealing More Effectively with Students' Assumptions, Expectations and Anxieties

All SLS courses need to provide the student with an adequate explanation of what lies in store for them in the course, what the purposes and objectives are for various activities, the rationale for methods employed,

the nature of the effort that is expected of them and the results that could conceivably be anticipated. Various reasons for the fact this is not currently being done became manifest during the review: some linguists believe they must ultimately accommodate to the expectations and opinions of students, rather than convince them of the appropriateness of another way of doing things; some are loathe to create expectations that might not be realized; some take no active part in the conduct of the course. Basically, however, most courses have not defined any long or short term objectives about which students could be informed other than that of learning "as much of" the language in question as possible.

A systematic approach to keeping the student informed about course design and procedures need not signify rigidity or inflexibility. Certainly the staff cannot be expected to lay out a firm schedule of events applicable to all students for an entire year. It is equally certain, however, that choices have been made about the best way to teach the course--what to focus on, how to sequence the material, what the benefits might be of a given exercise, what students should be able to do to achieve various results. It is a basic tenet of adult education to make such things explicit, both verbally and in writing, in order to reassure students about the efficacy of what they are doing and to keep the training on track. Doing this in some formalized fashion will address the most frequent post-training complaints which are about disorganization, wasted time and irrelevance of various elements of the course. For those SLS courses which depend for their success upon the talents, motivation or personality of a single instructor, even that fact should be explained, as well as what the advantages are to such a system.

The more students know about what is expected of them, the easier it will be to provide proper guidance and counseling and to do something about inadequate performance. There is a schoolwide need for improved guidance and counseling, and we will be informing the staff of requirements in this context.

Ultimately, each course will develop a set of written guidelines to be provided to students explaining in general terms the procedures, objectives, methods and expectations which characterize the

course. To initiate this effort, we intend to develop sample guidelines for one current language program, under the direction of the new Department of Program and Staff Development, to be completed by May 1, 1981. All other courses will be expected to produce such guidelines by August 1981, though these may need to be altered somewhat in the course of adaptation to new requirements.

Flexibility of Materials

One characteristic of SLS noted frequently in the program review is the significance attached to the development of "perfect" long range materials, requiring years to develop, which are intended ultimately to be the foundation of the course. If the objective of such an emphasis is merely to find better ways of teaching the grammar, rather than of using the language, then the effort--relative to the time and resources consumed--is misplaced. The effort to develop such an "anchor" to the course must not lead to the neglect of other important aspects: pedagogy, counseling, the development of functional capabilities, etc.

It is worth noting that some of the most successful programs are taking advantage of short-range, ad hoc, current and disposable materials (relatively quickly designed) which provide flexibility and high relevance to functional, job-related tasks. While students are generally more comfortable with a comprehensive text from which they can study independently and which provides theoretical background to what is being done in class, this does not mean that such a text need dominate, much less comprise a course. It may be sufficient to provide a springboard to an array of useful materials without making the student too heavily dependent on it.

We must avoid any focus on textbook materials which might lead to the treatment of work-related and cultural elements as optional add-ons which have come at the end of the course after the grammar has been covered. Otherwise the implication to students will be clear: anything not focused on the text will be seen as disruptive, distracting, and unnecessary and hence rejected. The School to some extent makes this a

Materials development projects will be evaluated by the Department of Program and Staff Development according to how they are intended to meet functional course objectives as opposed to any universal applicability they may have. Course design should be the determinant from which the utility of a textbook should follow. To the extent possible, texts should be designed as an impetus to other pedagogical classroom activities and provide the student with a reliable reference and workbook for self study.

Management of our Methods

It is essential that the responsibility not be left to the students for the job-related and cross-cultural aspects of language use which are to be focused on in the courses. The assumption that students know what they will need in the country of assignment is easily made and often untrue. Situations can be deceptively similar in a field as broad as foreign relations and experience is of limited help to someone who may indeed have done similar work in another country, but under an entirely different set of assumptions and conditions. It should be the responsibility of the individual programs to make the best possible assessment of the kinds of language and cultural interaction which will be most useful and to impress upon the students the reasons why what they are doing is relevant. To force students to make these decisions about what is important is to invite criticism about the disorganization of the course.

Special professional materials and activities must be accompanied by guidance to the student regarding objectives and task orientation. Only limited pedagogical use is being made of the materials that are available at present. The objective in most cases seems to be conversation about the materials at hand (VTRs, newspapers) and acquisition of vocabulary from them rather than the performance of prescribed tasks and functions involving them. Once again the impetus is left to the students to define the purpose of such activities by the degree to which they participate in the conversations. This seems yet another bias in favor of language itself rather than accomplishing anything with language.

It is essential to make task completion and problem resolution an integral part of job-related language study; to carry classroom activities to some logical conclusion, even if it involves nothing more than making a telephone call to set up an appointment or doing a memcon from a video-taped speech. Something should be achieved which makes sense in the professional realm but is not so specific as to limit its relevance to a class of diverse students.

To help the SLS staff become better acquainted both with the tasks to be performed by its clientele using the language and with methods which allow meaningful practice of such tasks during training, a series of seminars and workshops under the Department of Program and Staff Development will commence in March.

Making S/R Scores Work for Us

A characteristic of many programs is, in the absence of schoolwide performance criteria, the heavy reliance on S/R ratings to define both the objectives of a course and success in completing it. In view of our new orientation and the need to define proficiency in broader ways it is clear that S/R definitions need to be interpreted in functional terms to take into account performance objectives which go beyond the traditional mastery of grammar and vocabulary. The attention of the various agencies sending people to language training will inevitably be fixed on the designation of the position that is being trained for. It is therefore incumbent upon the School to translate the various S/R ratings into meaningful, concrete, functional terms which will be recognized as the objectives of the training itself rather than a general competence defined by a number.

SLS needs to give S/R scores broader significance to encompass communicative competence in a formal way. PSD will be tasked with reviewing proficiency definitions and development of testing procedures.

Training Objectives

While most linguists and instructors with whom we have spoken see no insurmountable obstacles to students achieving at least S-3/R-3 scores in the time allotted (Chinese, Arabic, Korean and Japanese are exceptions),

the response to such a proposition in those languages taught for only 20 weeks (Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and German) was highly sceptical. Nevertheless, we must aim for a significantly higher proportion of students achieving S-3/R-3 in all languages. More practice in functional language use will help, as will other program adaptations currently underway or contemplated. However, we will need to experiment with other techniques as well, including materials enrichment and an accurate measurement of the extent to which a somewhat longer training period produces meaningfully higher comptence. This will be a long-term effort and no general change in the 20-week duration of these courses is now planned, though a pilot program of 24 weeks may be undertaken in one of them on an experimental basis.

Training the Trainers

SLS is undertaking an ambitious and extensive self-evaluation and restructuring, the success of which ultimately relies on the dedication and creativity of the staff. It is, therefore, essential that new linguists and instructors be offered training opportunities which adequately prepare them for the tasks they are to perform.

To meet this need, SLS/PSD will begin to prepare separate orientation programs for new linguists and instructors to acquaint them with both organizational objectives and job requirements and standards. The target date for the completion of these programs is August, 1981.

CORRECTION FOR PROGRAM CONCEPTS PAPER

The last sentence on page 4 should read:

The School to some extent makes this a self-fulfilling prophecy in its materials by establishing the primacy of language structure over language use.

Approved For Release 2003/05/27 : CIA-RDP84B00890R000800060023-1

by Doug Jones, M/FSI/SLS/PSD

Two basic approaches appear to me to characterize present SLS courses regarding the objectives of classroom language training. The first is procedural, cumulative, and additive, stressing fundamentals, structural control and comprehensiveness, patterns and variations, mimickry and dialogues. It is basically linear. The second may involve aspects of the first, but in a less systematic fashion, focussing on student-perceived needs and having as a primary objective some student-generated attempts at natural conversation in the target language; working with what a student wants to say. It is basically cyclical.

A problem with the first method is that the student may become too passively dependent on a language stimulus to which he must respond. The second, on the other hand, presumes conversational ability to be an end in itself. Neither really focusses on seeing to it that the student is able to accomplish anything with the language he knows.

SLS management has called for a reorientation of our language training efforts around task resolution and functional, job-relevant language use. Among the many problems that will be taken up by the Department of Program and Staff Development in SLS (PSD) will be that of defining "jobs" and job needs in the foreign affairs agencies in a way which will be useful in the design of program activities. No less a problem will be that of designing courses for students with a wide variety of professional needs and tasks to perform without fragmenting the training.

I believe most of my Foreign Service colleagues would agree that it would serve little purpose to try to describe in detail the role and functions of the "typical" political officer, cultural affairs officer, security officer, etc., and to try to design courses around their job descriptions. The variables of country, specialty, mission requirements, job scope and personal work habits and style combine to make distortions of such stereotypes. The same is no doubt true of the job specialities of the many other agencies whose employees receive training at SLS. Anything specific enough to help tailor a language program would not have sufficient applicability to all students; anything general enough to be acceptable to all would not be workable.

The key to resolving this dilemna lies, I believe, not in the job characteristics themselves (though it is useful to know as much about them as possible), but in the nature

of the tasks required to carry them out and in the varieties of language useful in doing so. An analysis of these factors may have more meaning for course designers than one centering on various job specialties. We can probably generalize with less distortion about language functions than about job functions. This paper will deal in both an analytical and a descriptive way with some of the typical broad tasks and language use requirements common to foreign affairs work. It is hoped we will soon have additional data from the agencies other than State to supplement and refine my examples, which are drawn largely from my own Foreign Service experiences.

A. Oral Proficiency.

Several aspects of language production common to the Foreign Service milieu will be discussed here and more will undoubtedly suggest themselves. Each can be worked with at various levels of language proficiency and in a variety of situational settings. What is important is to make them count for something rather than to allow speaking practice to stand alone as an accomplishment -- to focus on the utility of what is being rehearsed.

1. The ability to formulate questions aimed at eliciting useful information of a professional nature. A distinction should perhaps be drawn here between soliciting fact and opinion. A consular officer conducting a visa interview generally requires only a simple, polite, straight-forward questioning skill. His clients are, after all, coming to him for services and he is primarily interested in determining the facts in order to make a responsible decision: "May I see some evidence that your family will support you while you are studying in the U.S.?" "What were the circumstances of your arrest and conviction in 1946?" Such questions need to be focussed, direct and clear, aimed at an illuminating response. Though a certain delicacy may be required in obtaining such information, the situation is somewhat different from that of an officer trying to elicit an informative opinion or information which has larger, less personal implications. Thus the Labor Attache may draw out a union official with: "I don't suppose these rumors of a transportation strike should be taken too seriously?" Or an internal political officer might resort to flattery with an important regional official: "In view of the popular support for your programs, might you be considering running for national office next year?" Or an economic officer to a local entrepreneur: "But don't you think a tariff on imported widgets would ultimately hurt local industry more than it would help?"

Such questions look somewhat artful and stilted on paper. In these and the other examples which follow, the cultural context in which they would sound appropriate is of course missing. Each language would have to rephrase them in the manner most appropriate to the prevailing cultural parameters, before they can aspire to realism. Nevertheless, I think the functional need is clear enough in this case: the use of language as a catalyst to gain information.

2. The ability to raise a concern or objection, politely but firmly. To express disagreement with an action or position. To make a point or to persuade a listener. A lot of ground is covered here. The consul may need to protest to prison officials the mistreatment of an American prisoner; a commercial attache might try to convince a potential investor to "buy American"; the press attache may take umbrage, on behalf of the Ambassador, at a misrepresentation of a U.S. position in the opposition press; the DCM may wish to communicate to the Foreign Ministry that the local record of human rights violations could lead to the curtailment of economic aid; the cultural attache may wish to convince a leading author to make an exchange visit to U.S. universities; a military attache may inquire why a region of the country has been declared off limits to U.S. personnel; an AID technician may have to convince local farmers of the need for a better irrigation system.

The important characteristic here is that such situations involve the volitional, aggressive production of language by someone who has a point to make in achieving a professional objective. In some cases, a high degree of formality may be required, in others almost none. The important thing in practicing this skill is to fulfill a verbal "assignment" in getting one's point across; something that can be worked with, even at primitive levels of language competence. In designing classroom activities appropriate to this kind of language use, program developers may wish to consider working with simulated adversary relationships which put a controlled amount of "constructive pressure" on the student to make his point.

3. The ability to formulate a request that an action be taken. This function gets us very solidly into the realm of problem solving and is common to all overseas USG agencies in one way or another. The speaker is required to request assistance in some matter which he cannot resolve personally. There is, therefore, a need for both precision of expression and an element of "manipulative" explanation, thus:

Consular officer to local coroner: "I realize an autopsy isn't required in a case like this, but the family and employer of the deceased would like one done for insurance purposes. Can you help us?"

Political officer to Foreign Ministry contact: "Congressman Crass would like to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during his visit. Can this be arranged?"

Regional Security Officer to Chief of Police: "In view of the recent demonstrations, I believe it is necessary to increase the guard around the Ambassador's residence. Can you assign an extra man to this detail?"

Air Attache to Defense Ministry official: "Please arrange flight clearances for the two aircraft transporting the official U.S. delegation to the state funeral of Prime Minister Gurke."

U.S. narcotics official to Security Officer: "Would you please check on the status of our extradition request involving Irving Smack and inform us whether we need to submit any further paperwork?"

Obviously the situation is the determinant in all these examples, but generally speaking the objective is to obtain an agreement or a commitment to take some specific action; to impress upon the contact the responsibility for that action.

4. The ability to explain -- even in simple terms -- a U.S. position, action, policy, point of law, national, value, etc. This may be seen as the obverse side of #2 above. Here a more defensive language "posture" is emphasized in response to a stimulus: a challenge, inquiry, misinterpretation, etc. Generally, some narrative skills are required -- the ability to put together an argument, exposition or explanation cohesively and to hold the floor. Ambassador Harry Barnes has identified this as the need to be able to advocate a position. At higher language levels it may also involve debate. Related to this may also be the need to stall, evade, filibuster or defuse the argument. Some examples:

Political officer to a student group: "I know this is an important issue between our countries, but I don't think we can expect a decision as early as you suggest. Let me explain how our treaty ratification process works...."

Visa officer to applicant: "Under U.S. law your affiliation with the Communist Party renders you ineligible for a regular tourist visa. There are, however, waiver procedures which may be invoked. This is what you must do...."

Cultural affairs officer to local artist: "I'm afraid the U.S. government cannot sponsor your project. I would be happy to suggest some private institutions, but I just don't think you would get much support for a twelve foot statue of Benedict Arnold. Here's why...."

Ambassador's Secretary: "I'm sorry, we cannot accept a collect call. Please tell the General we will return his call."

5. The ability to speak effectively on the telephone. Each country seems to have its own idiosyncratic telephone behavior which can totally confuse the unprepared foreigner -- even those with considerable language competence. This is an ability which cuts across the functions previously mentioned -- questioning, requesting, explaining, narrating -- compounding the difficulty of all of them by taking away the visual cues normally involved in personal communication. On the other hand, the speaker has the advantage of preparing what he wants to say (provided he is initiating the call). In view of the amount of USG business conducted by telephone, this is perhaps an aspect of language competence which should be given more attention and practice in SLS.

6. The ability to "say the appropriate thing" in a social context, based upon cross cultural awareness. This is not simply a matter of small talk or ritual greetings and niceties, but involves an informational use of language which can help establish a person's professional credentials, indicating an awareness of the inner workings of society, knowledge of local sensitivities, etc. Cultural affairs officer to Education Ministry official: "I understand your son has been admitted to the university. This must be a great relief and a proud time for you." Consular officer to District Attorney: "The behavior of these two tourists is of course deplorable, but unfortunately it is not uncommon for our young people to take foreign flags as souvenirs of their travels without considering the implications. It is certainly not something we would tolerate at home. I think, however, that if we can avoid prosecution, full restitution and an apology will be made."

This function applies to all employees who need to "get something done" with language but will, of course vary as a person's professional contacts vary. Thus, while the

cultural officer may well decry the chaotic Athenian traffic to a university professor, he will probably not add: "Things were no doubt more orderly under the Junta." A military attache, however, might well allude to the Junta period in a professional sense when talking with a Greek counterpart about comparative state of military preparedness, and do so without giving offense.

7. Soloing. Three functions are linked here, which are somewhat specialized but require a significant amount of practice and preparation: delivery of prepared public remarks; delivery of extemporaneous public remarks and; functioning as an interpreter. The first two are most frequently indulged in by our ICA colleagues, though FSOs are sometimes called upon to represent the Mission on some special local occasion or holiday and to make remarks.

The interpreter function is also very much ad hoc. The Ambassador or DCM may take a language qualified officer along to a professional meeting because he does not wish to rely on local interpreters, or on a show-the-flag visit to a local factory, Trade Fair, etc. Or, an officer may be designated as control officer for a CODEL or other visiting U.S. dignitary and serve as interpreter as well.

B. Aural Comprehension.

It has been said that, as a people, Americans are far more willing to talk than to listen. One hopes this is not true of professionals in foreign affairs, where it is crucial not only to understand the meaning of what is said but the significance as well.

1. The ability to follow an exposition or conversation in which one is not necessarily a participant. Whether one is following events at a public gathering (political rally, trial, etc.) or just plain eavesdropping on someone else's conversation at a cocktail party, the information gathered constitutes data unedited for effect on the incidental listener and therefore theoretically a more reliable measure of opinion.

Most language programs place heavy emphasis on participatory conversation, which leaves the student probably more concerned with what he wants to say next (and how to say it) than what is being said to him. The importance of participatory conversation for the production of language is undeniable, but no less emphasis should be placed on hearing the language spoken between (or among) native speakers in a manner which makes no allowance for what the student is likely to know or understand. And

this, preferably, with a host of background noises and other disturbances -- a setting far more in keeping with what is actually encountered abroad. The ability to follow this kind of conversation and provide feedback is very much in line with professional requirements.

2. The ability to follow and understand the broadcast media. It is particularly important for political and ICA officers to understand the way news is covered by the local media and therefore the impression the populace is likely to have based on this coverage. It is, of course, also important for everyone in order to know what is going on. Most programs in SLS that I know anything about have materials which reflect an understanding of this need.

3. Having a feel for the national humor. There is a perceived need on the part of many foreign service personnel to be able to participate actively in jesting, both folk wisdom and X-rated humor. The reasons are fairly obvious: it helps create rapport by loosening formality and establishing a communality; it helps release tensions; it establishes an aura of friendliness quickly. On the other side of the coin, a knowledge of what one may and may not joke about can enable us to avoid giving unintentional offense.

C. Reading Skills.

1. The ability to gist articles from the print media. FSOs and other agency officers generally need to have at least skimmed the headlines and spotted articles of interest before ever settling down to work for the day. Being caught unaware at the Ambassador's morning staff meeting can be acutely embarrassing. A lot of classroom time can be wasted sitting with a dictionary translating articles word for word. A better exercise might be to hand each student a paper and give him 15 minutes to locate all articles on a general subject before selecting one or two to gist.

2. Ability to recognize documents of an official nature. This is particularly important for consular officers who are constantly called on to notarize strange looking documents or to make decisions (visas, citizenship, Federal Benefits eligibility) based upon the authenticity of documents submitted.

3. Some knowledge of the national literature (if there is one). This should include, I suppose "national thought" as well. It is of course particularly important for ICA work, but advisable for all, to have read a few

things in the original. While it is perhaps asking too much to require students to read Nietzsche or Freud in German, they should at least be aware that these were among the great stylists of the language. Surely some exposure to poetry, drama, prose and folk literature is possible in most languages.

D. Orthography.

Orthography has only limited direct applicability to professional needs, except for those who want to take notes directly in the language. Writing skill should probably remain an optional objective for most students. The serious student who becomes proficient in other aspects of the language usually makes an effort to pick this up individually. I do not believe much classroom time should be devoted to the task. Orthography seldom presents a problem in most languages.

In conclusion, I am not suggesting that these functional categories represent a comprehensive approach to language instruction. They represent rather some possible linchpins which can help focus and hold our courses together, providing the atmospherics for culminating classroom activities which will allow students meaningful practice in applying their newly-acquired skills.